



Role of the Office of the Independent Budget Analyst

City of San Diego

Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst

February 12, 2015

Why Was The IBA Created?



In 2003, serious financial problems led to a loss of confidence at City Hall:

- ✦ Serious budget shortfalls, irresponsible expenditures
- ✦ Underfunding of pension system while increasing benefits
- ✦ City lost its credit rating, could not issue debt (no bonding for streets, sidewalks, etc.)
- ✦ SEC was charged with oversight of our financial operations

Why Was The IBA Created?



Loss of confidence led to citizen initiative to do away with City Manager form of government and switch to “Strong Mayor”:

- + Approved by voters in Fall 2004
- + Sitting Mayor resigns, election for new Mayor held
- + “Strong Mayor” went into effect January 2006

Why Was The IBA Created?



Strong Mayor ballot also included creation of the Office of the IBA to advise the Council.

- ✚ Elected Mayor, not professional manager, is now running the City
- ✚ All City employees now report to Mayor, carrying out his/her agenda
- ✚ Councilmembers no longer had a professional to advise them on complex matters

Why Was The IBA Created?



- ✦ Council consists of nine individuals with very different perspectives (not necessarily in line with the Mayor's)
- ✦ Council needs unbiased, objective information and advice for effective decision-making
- ✦ Public also needs objective information to effectively participate in public processes

What Were Proponents of the “Switch” Seeking?



- ✦ Whether right or wrong, many in the community blamed the City’s serious financial problems on the City Manager form of government.
- ✦ In converting to a Strong Mayor-Strong Council form of government, proponents were seeking the following changes:
 - A leader who is accountable and responsible to voters
 - Greater transparency and accessibility to City Hall and the City’s leader
 - Clear agenda, vision and goals communicated by the City’s leader
 - Greater authority for the City’s leader, ability to act more quickly

What Were Proponents of the “Switch” Seeking?



“New form is superior to the old. The City has spent a lot of time digging itself out of a hole created by former administrations. The new system allows for openness, transparency and checks and balances.”

“Under the old system an unelected bureaucrat was responsible for city administration. And he kept his job by sweeping problems under the rug....That's how we got an underfunded pension system and hundreds of millions of dollars in deferred maintenance.”

“It gives the voters someone to hold accountable. If something goes wrong, the voters can blame it on the mayor and vote him out in the next election.”

Why our office's role is important...



It's critical to have checks and balances between the Executive Branch (Mayor) and the Legislative Branch (City Council) in a Strong Mayor form of government.



- ✦ To help ensure the City Council is coequal to the Mayor, Council needs its own executive-level position to:
 - Serve as independent advisor on proposals from the Mayor and all items before the Council;
 - Provide Council with the information needed to make informed, effective decisions; and
 - Identify issues and make recommendations to approve, amend, or reject the proposal.

About the IBA...



- ✚ The IBA is not elected, but appointed by the City Council, and can only be removed by a majority vote of Council.
- ✚ The IBA:
 - Must be a local government professional with significant financial, budget, policy and management experience
 - Serves “at will”
 - Manages and leads the direction of the office, and
 - Hires and supervises all staff in the office.

Our Mission...



To provide clear, objective and unbiased analysis and advice to the City Council and the public on important financial and policy issues.

- ✚ In order for us to provide clear, objective, and unbiased analysis and advice, we have to be independent.

What makes us independent...



- ✦ Independent from Mayor by definition of position.
- ✦ Independent from Council as a result of establishing ground rules and protocols.
- ✦ Function independently of Council on a day-to-day basis.
- ✦ City Council and its Committees direct which issues to address, but they do not tell the IBA what to recommend or what position to take.

What makes us independent...



- ✦ We rely on objective research and analysis to support our conclusions and recommendations.
- ✦ We do not discuss positions or reports with Council Members as they are developed—Council sees our reports at the same time as the public.
- ✦ Our recommendations may not match Council Members' positions.
- ✦ Independent Budget Analyst is an advisory office.

Even if individual Council members do not agree with our position, the City Council as a whole is relying on our office to be objective and unbiased, so they expect and respect our objectivity and independence.

Significant Issues Facing the City...



- ✚ Infrastructure - \$2.0B deferred capital backlog (e.g. streets, sidewalks, City facilities)
- ✚ Police retention/compensation
- ✚ New Chargers stadium
- ✚ Convention Center expansion
- ✚ Ensuring our water supplies for the future
- ✚ Minimum wage

Significant Issues Facing the City...



- ✚ Addressing homelessness
- ✚ Affordable housing supply
- ✚ Storm water permit requirements
- ✚ Diverse and local economic growth
- ✚ Open Data
- ✚ Climate change